

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations of eligibility for individual properties or districts. See instructions in *Guidelines for Completing National Register Forms* (National Register Bulletin 16). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the requested information. If an item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, styles, materials, and areas of significance, enter only the categories and subcategories listed in the instructions. For additional space use continuation sheets (Form 10-900a). Type all entries.

1. Name of Property

historic name Mary Holmes Seminary
other names/site number Mary Holmes Junior College Historic District

2. Location

street & number Highway 50 west N/A ☐ not for publication
city, town West Point N/A ☐ vicinity
state Mississippi code MS county Clay code 25 zip code 39773

3. Classification

Ownership of Property	Category of Property	Number of Resources within Property	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> building(s)	Contributing	Noncontributing
<input type="checkbox"/> public-local	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u> buildings
<input type="checkbox"/> public-State	<input type="checkbox"/> site	<u> </u>	<u> </u> sites
<input type="checkbox"/> public-Federal	<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<u> </u>	<u> </u> structures
	<input type="checkbox"/> object	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u> objects
			<u>1</u> Total

Name of related multiple property listing:
Clay County Multiple Resource Area

Number of contributing resources previously
listed in the National Register 0

4. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this
☒ nomination ☐ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the
National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.
In my opinion, the property ☒ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Kenneth H. P. Pool
Signature of certifying official

SEPT. 18, 1991
Date

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ☐ meets ☐ does not meet the National Register criteria. ☐ See continuation sheet.

Signature of commenting or other official

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

5. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby, certify that this property is:

☐ entered in the National Register.

☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined eligible for the National
Register. ☐ See continuation sheet.

☐ determined not eligible for the
National Register.

☐ removed from the National Register.

☐ other, (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper

Date of Action

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: school

Education: education-related housing

Current Functions (enter categories from instructions)

Education: school

Education: library

Vacant/Not in use

7. Description

Architectural Classification

(enter categories from instructions)

Craftsman

Colonial Revival

Materials (enter categories from instructions)

foundation brick

walls brick

weatherboard

roof asphalt

other

Describe present and historic physical appearance.

The Mary Holmes Junior College Historic District includes all of the buildings on the knoll north of Highway 50 which has served as the center of the campus since 1897. At the top of a curving drive into the campus, the most prominent building is the raised, two story, L-shaped Main Hall. (See photos # 1, 2.) To the west and a little in front of this building, on the side of the knoll toward the highway, is the Farmhouse, a cubic, two story, frame house, former residence of the college presidents. (See photo #3.) Other elements of the district are most visible from the drive that curves around Main Hall. A small, hipped roof brick building which once served as the laundry and the two story, rectangular, North Hall are behind the main building on the north side of the knoll. (See photos # 4,5.) The vernacular Craftsman Barr Library, a brick-veneered one story building, the open, conical-roofed Pavilion, and a recent frame building are located northwest of the main building. (See photos # 6,7,8.)

A few large trees are located between the campus building cluster and the road, and several more to the east and north, but the top of the knoll remains open, much as historic photographs show it in 1897. The "district" is the collection of buildings that expresses the presence of Mary Holmes Junior College in the community. They range in age from 50 to 90 years old, and in size from large to very small. Each building is different in size, function, and style.

The styles of the buildings vary from the extremely utilitarian laundry and North Hall to the Colonial Revival style used on the Main Hall and applied to the Farmhouse, and the vernacular Craftsman design of the Barr Library and Pavilion. There is a small, one story frame building to the east of the library which is neither visually or historically linked to the central campus building cluster. The district boundaries must include this building if they continue to the eastern edge of the property. On the western slope of the knoll, tennis courts form the district boundary line. Highway 50 forms the southern boundary, and an arbitrary line behind North Hall sets the northern lines.

The oldest building in the district is North Hall, built in 1900 as the boys' dormitory. The Farmhouse was built in 1912, and the laundry in 1910. The Barr Library, originally the music hall, was built in 1920, and the open air pavilion appears to be of the same vintage. The newest building in the cluster is the Main Hall, which was built in 1939-40, after fires had destroyed the original 1897 building and its 1900 replacement.

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Mary Holmes Junior College District, West Point, Clay County, Mississippi

Section number 7 Page 1

Of the seven buildings in the district, only one is Non-Contributing by age. The buildings in the Mary Holmes District are listed and numbered in order of location on the circular drive that loops the knoll top. They are evaluated individually according to the standard rating system.

HISTORIC DISTRICT PROPERTY LIST AND RATINGS

The buildings in the Mary Holmes Junior College Historic District are listed and numbered in order of survey. They are evaluated individually according to the standard rating system which describes them as either Contributing or Non-contributing to the district.

- C Contributing buildings promote the district's historic identity through their architecture and associations, adding to its "sense of place." Contributing buildings are representatives of the age, the styles and materials used during the district's peak growth and development era.
- N Non-contributing buildings are those which are, by age, style, or materials, not compatible with district resources, or which, though compatible, were built outside the period of significance. This designation includes both buildings that are similar in scale and materials but are not 50 years old, and buildings which are dissimilar and intrude on district identity.

Mary Holmes Junior College Historic District

1. C MHC Administration Building: Colonial Revival, 1940, two and a half story frame L-shaped building on a brick raised foundation. Plain exterior has shingled surface, applied classical details in window and door surrounds. Interior surfaces have been redone, but hardwood stairs and railings remain.
2. C MHC Farmhouse: Colonial Revival, 1912, two story, cubical, frame building which once housed the Mary Holmes Junior College Presidents and their families. Exterior is sided in same shingles used on main building, has similar classical wooden details. Interior has been remodeled into offices. Building is vacant.
3. C MHC Laundry Building: no style, 1910, one story, one small room with entry porch. Brick construction, hipped roof.

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Mary Holmes Junior College Historic District, Clay County, Mississippi

Section number 7 Page 2

4. C North Hall: no style, c 1900, two story, hip-roofed, brick, two section building used as boys' dormitory, laundry building, and storage over years. Now used as storage area, building has one story rear metal addition.
5. C Barr Library: Craftsman, 1920, one story, regularly massed, brick-veneered frame building which originally served as Music Hall, now serves as Library, has one story metal extension attached at rear. Interior has painted woodwork, plastered walls, wood floors.
6. C Pavilion: c.1920, one story, conical roofed, open pavilion supported on turned posts, has beadboard ceiling and benches, concrete slab base.
7. N Post Office/Utility : vaguely Bungalow style, c. 1950, one story frame front-gabled building east of Library. One story metal building added perpendicularly at rear connects with Library's rear extension. Non-contributing by age.

8. Statement of Significance

Certifying official has considered the significance of this property in relation to other properties:

☐ nationally ☐ statewide ☒ locally

Applicable National Register Criteria ☒ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D

Criteria Considerations (Exceptions) ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Areas of Significance (enter categories from instructions)

Education

Ethnic Heritage: Black

Period of Significance

1897-1940

Significant Dates

N/A

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Significant Person

N/A

Architect/Builder

Unknown

State significance of property, and justify criteria, criteria considerations, and areas and periods of significance noted above.

Mary Holmes Junior College, formerly Mary Holmes Seminary, is significant for its role as the major institution for the education of Black students in the Clay County area from its founding in 1897. The school continues in active operation today, but for purposes of this nomination the period of historical significance closes in 1940, the year the Administration Building was built.

The Educational Resources section of the Historic Context statement describes how Mississippi's educational system evolved, and how Black students, promised "separate but equal" schools by the 1890 Constitution, came up on the short end of the equal sign. Clay County school records show, throughout the first three decades of the 20th century, a declining number of one and two room schools for rural whites, and a continuing number for Blacks. Entries in the Superintendent's record books at the beginning of school years in the 1890s and early 1900s show entries recommending repairs as necessary for Black schools and consolidation efforts for white schools.

Though Mary Holmes opened with the aim of educating only Black girls, primarily in those domestic duties they could expect to do for their families or for others, its aims changed to include boys and to offer training in a greatly increased number of vocational areas as the 20th century began to require more highly trained individuals to do new forms of "routine" work. Statistics from a National Survey of the Education of Teachers of 1936 said that private schools like Mary Holmes were the educational source for 62 percent of the Black teachers in Southern public high schools. (Something of a Faith, p. 27) At the end of the 1930s, they were still almost the only source for Blacks attempting to educate themselves out of agriculture-based dependence and into common contemporary jobs.

So, Mary Holmes was the "centralized" focal point for Black education up until the 1960s, when schools were officially desegregated. Today, as an accredited Junior College, it still offers education and training not available in public high schools and colleges, and it remains important in the educational resources of Clay County.

☐ See continuation sheet

9. Major Bibliographical References

See Historic Context bibliography.

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

☐ See continuation sheet

Primary location of additional data:

- ☒ State historic preservation office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☐ University
- ☐ Other

Specify repository:

Miss. Dept. of Archives & History

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of property Approximately 5 acres

UTM References

A

1	6	3	4	5	5	0	0	3	7	1	9	7	5	0
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Zone Easting Northing

B

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Zone Easting Northing

C

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D

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

☐ See continuation sheet

Verbal Boundary Description

See continuation sheet.

☐ See continuation sheet

Boundary Justification

The boundaries include the group of historic buildings in the main (early) section of the Mary Holmes campus and the school's traditional "front yard," the land sloping toward the south to Highway 50.

☐ See continuation sheet

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Joan Embree
organization Preservation Consultant date 8/2/89 (revised 8/91)
street & number 20 Lake Valley Road telephone (601) 324-0410
city or town Starkville state MS zip code 39759

Owner: Mary Holmes Junior College, c/o Dr. Sammie Potts, President, P.O. Drawer 1257,
West Point, MS 39773

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet**

Mary Holmes Junior College Historic District, Clay County, Mississippi

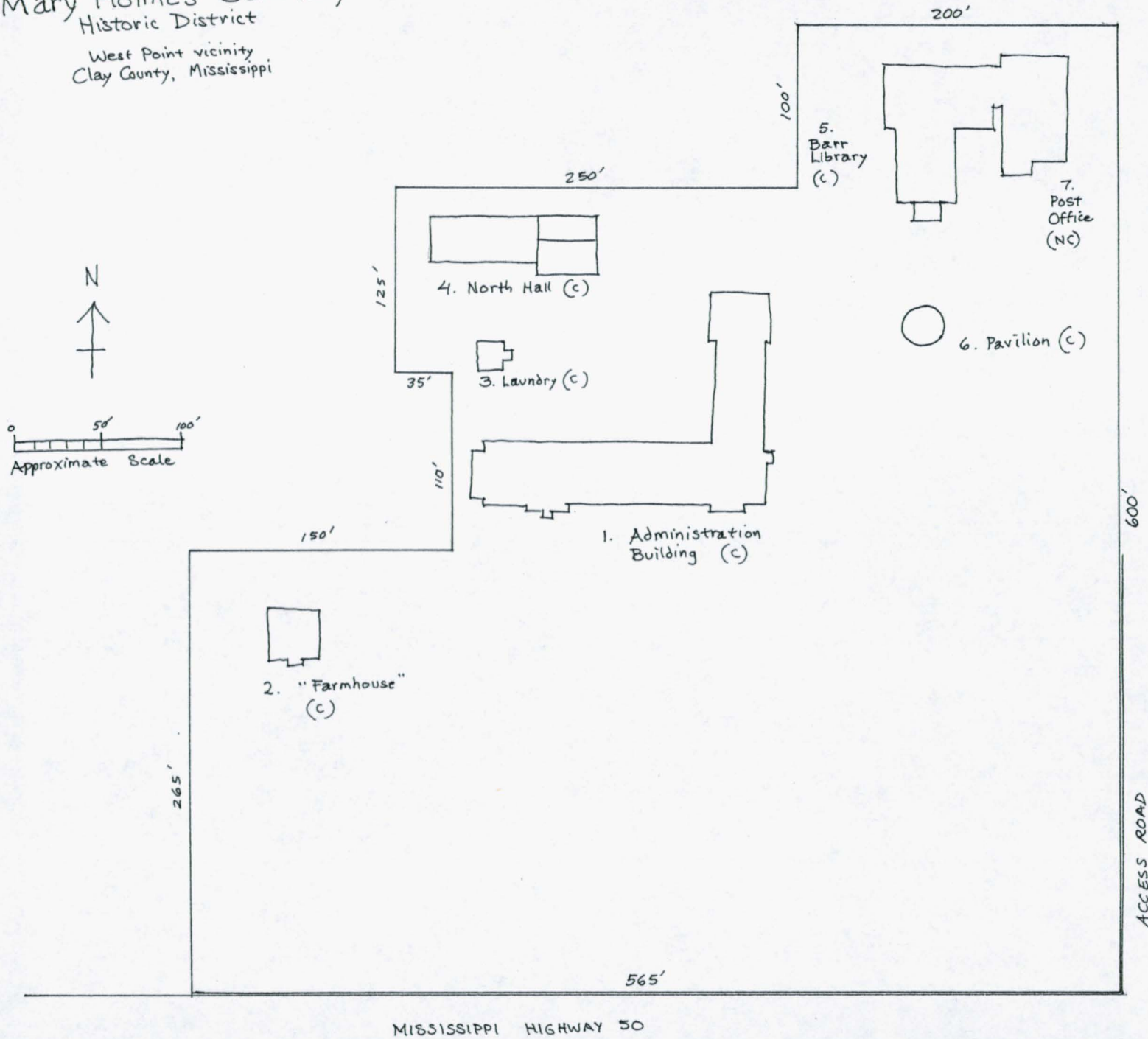
Section number 10 Page 1

Verbal Boundary Description

The nominated property consists of an irregularly-shaped portion of Parcel 2 in Section 10, T 17 S, R 6 E, as indicated on Clay County tax map no. 82; and is defined by the boundaries indicated on the accompanying map.

Mary Holmes Seminary Historic District

West Point vicinity
Clay County, Mississippi



United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

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Section number _____ Page _____

SUPPLEMENTARY LISTING RECORD

NRIS Reference Number: 91001637

Date Listed: 11/15/91

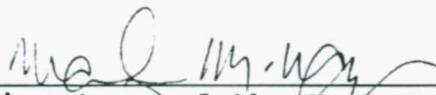
Holmes, Mary, Junior College H. D.
Property Name

Clay County MISSISSIPPI
County State

Clay County MPS

Multiple Name

This property is listed in the National Register of Historic Places in accordance with the attached nomination documentation subject to the following exceptions, exclusions, or amendments, notwithstanding the National Park Service certification included in the nomination documentation.

for 
Signature of the Keeper

7/10/92
Date of Action

=====

Amended Items in Nomination:

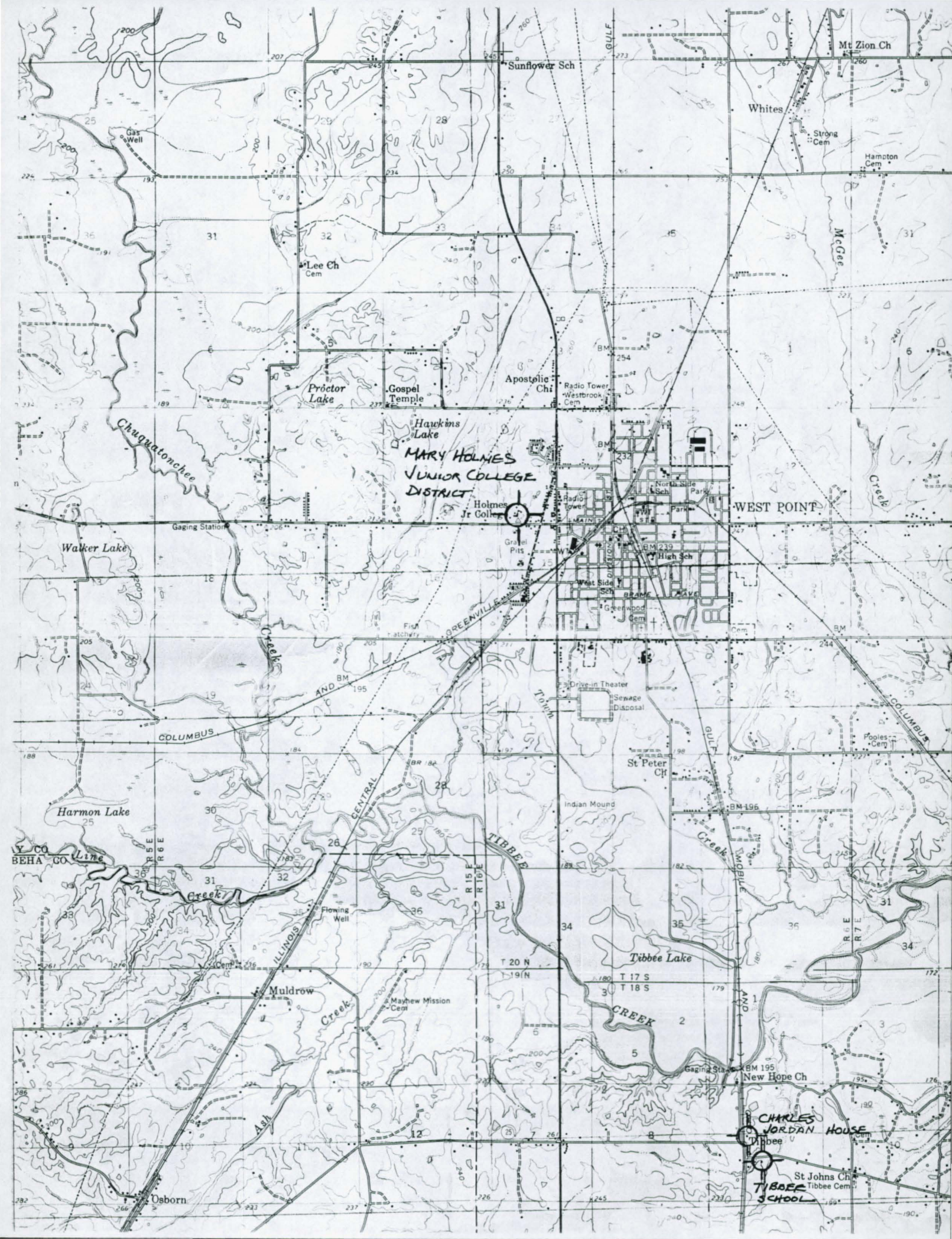
Section No. 10

The verbal boundary description is amended to read: "The nominated property consists of an irregularly-shaped portion of Parcel 2 in Section 10, T 17 S, R 6 E, as indicated on Clay County tax map no. 82; and is defined by the boundaries indicated on the accompanying map."

This wording was provided by Richard Cawthon, of the Mississippi SHPO (4/24/92).

DISTRIBUTION:

National Register property file
Nominating Authority (without nomination attachment)





MARY HOLMES COLLEGE DISTRICT ELEMENT #1
WEST POINT, CLAY COUNTY, MS

EMBREE

MAY, 1989

MISS DEPT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY

FRONT & EAST ELEVATIONS, VIEW TO NORTHWEST

PHOTO #1 OF 8



MARY HOLMES COLLEGE DISTRICT
WEST POINT, CLAY COUNTY, MS

EMBREE \$ HISTORY
MAY, 1989
MLB DEPT. OF ARCHIVES
FRONT ELEVATION, MAIN BUILDING, VIEW TO NORTHEAST



MARY HOLMES
WEST POINT, COLLEGE DISTRICT -
CLAY COUNTY, MS

EMBREE

MAY 1989

MISS DEPT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY
FRONT ELEVATION, THE FARMHOUSE

VIEW TO NORTH



MARY HOLMES COLLEGE DISTRICT
WEST POINT CLAY COUNTY, MS

EMBRREE
MAY, 1989

MISS DEPT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY
FRONT ELEVATION CAUNDRY VIEW TO NORTH
PHOTO # 4 OF 8



MARY HOLMES COLLEGE DISTRICT
WEST POINT, CLAY COUNTY, MS

EMBREE

MAY, 1989

MISS DEPT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY

SOUTH ELEVATION OF NORTH HALL - VIEW TO NORTHWEST

PHOTO # 5 OF 8



MARY HULMES COLLEGE DISTRICT - ELEMENT # 5
WEST POINT, CLAY COUNTY, MS
EMBREE

MAY, 1989

MISS DEPARTMENT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY
FRONT ELEVATION, BARR LIBRARY VIEW TO NORTH
PHOTO # 6 OF 8



MARY HOLMES COLLEGE DISTRICT
WEST POINT, CLAY COUNTY MS

EMBRÉE
MAY, 1989

MISS DEPT OF ARCHIVES & HISTORY
PAVILLION. VIEW TO NORTHEAST
PHOTO # 7 OF 8